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LETTER DATED 19 NOVEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward the attached statement of the Foreign Ministry of the State of Eritrea issued on 19 November 1998 on Djibouti's decision to sever diplomatic ties with Eritrea.

I should be grateful if you would kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex

Statement issued on 19 November 1998 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea on Djibouti's decision to sever diplomatic ties with Eritrea

The Government of Eritrea has been repeatedly expressing to the Government of Djibouti its concern about the latter's unwarranted cooperation with Ethiopia in its war efforts against Eritrea. Eritrea's diplomatic protests were accompanied by incontrovertible material evidence. As the Government of Djibouti failed to heed these protests, Eritrea sent a high-level delegation led by the Foreign Minister on 10 September 1998 to convey a letter from President Isaias Afwerki to the President of Djibouti. Eritrea also conveyed its concerns to the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Against the backdrop of these developments, Eritrea requested that Djibouti not be part of the OAU High-level Committee at the Ouagadougou meeting on 7 and 8 November, as it could not be a party to the conflict and an honest broker at the same time. Eritrea further clarified at the meeting that it was willing to submit all the evidence at hand and requested the Government of Djibouti to allow an independent team into the country to verify the facts on the ground. The Government of Djibouti in fact admitted its involvement by its silence at the meeting and its failure to respond positively to the request.

In the aftermath of the Ouagadougou meeting, the Government of Djibouti went out of its way to heap insult on Eritrea. And finally, on 18 November 1998, it announced that it had severed diplomatic ties with Eritrea, requesting the closure of the embassy in Djibouti within three days. The latest act of the Government of Djibouti only confirms the position it has taken against Eritrea in the border conflict with Ethiopia.